

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, November 19, 1896, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Dr. Alexander Graham Bell. 1331 Connecticut Avenue, Washington, D. C. Thursday, Nov. 19th 1896. My dear Alec:

No letter from you today, but one from Mr. McCurdy saying among other things that you had established the habit of not coming home to lunch. I don't like that, I am afraid you cannot be getting proper food and that with your hard work you will be run down. You have a splendid physical organization, and it ought to last in good order for a long time, if you only don't tamper with it. Please do be careful, I know how much in a hurry you are, but please don't make too much haste and come home to me all broken down, please dear be careful.

My new furniture from New York and Baltimore has come, and certainly is an improvement. I am very much pleased because I discovered some silk upstairs which I can have made up into portieres for the parlor, thus saving the expense of buying new ones. Then Mamma is going to give me the dress I am to wear at Elsie's coming out which will save my getting one. This dress is one that she wore at Auntie Berta and Auntie Kittie's coming out some twenty-five or thirty years ago. Grace says it is a perfectly beautiful red satin. I haven't seen it yet.

Mr. McCurdy says you have had your first snow. It is very wram here, our windows wide open all day and outside wraps a nuisance.

Debutante and tea and reception cards are beginning to come in thick and fast. Our party has been announced in all the papers several times. Elsie is quite pleased to know that she is a "pretty 2 brunette who will be very popular." Aileen and I have been hard at work on our invitations all day long, there is a tremendous lot of work about them.

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You should have seen the letter Sir Julian Pauncefote wrote Mamma thanking her for some flowers and tickets. It covered four sheets of note-paper and was more like the gushing production of a schoolgirl than the matured note of a diplomat in one of the highest positions in the greatest nation on earth. It really was a curiosity considered in that light.

Mr. McCurdy says he thinks you approve of my letter to Mr. Kennan, and that you want to see Mr. Kennan's letter. I will send both, the last I have not replied to. I will also send my letter to Mr. Blanchard and his to me. There is only one point that strikes me as being weak in my plan, but that is the corner-stone, so it's serious. It is that Miss McCurdy is entirely with me. She was when I talked over the matter with her going to the Narrows. Then she was willing to engineer the whole scheme through with a backing of fifty dollars. I should never have made the offer otherwise. But she may since then have come to the conclusion that the scheme is impracticable. She has not told me so, but Mr. Kennan says she has. I should not for one moment think of attempting to open the reading room unless I had her hearty cooperation and that of her friends and before going further with Mr. Blanchard and Mr. Kennan I must be assured of this. A certain number of townspeople must be heartily in sympathy with an undertaking of this kind before it can hope to be successful. I believe that there is a sufficient 3 number of people who would work hard for the reading room, but Miss McCurdy is the only person I know who could interest them. No I don't mean that because I know that you could arouse their interest probably better than any one else, but only Miss McCurdy could get continued practical results from this aroused interest because neither you or I will be in town to work ourselves. I am much inclined to believe that it is already too late in the season to accomplish anything. I have felt that it ought to have begun in Sept. or at latest October, but no one took any notice of my letter. I feel rather discouraged, I am sure the thing is thoroughly practical, but I fear that mismanagement has spoilt the opportunity for making it a success. I cannot antagonize Mr. Kennan. I think I am a failure every way, I have capabilities, but they are all made of no effort by my lack of strength of will and determination and energy. It is so

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horrid to feel I have so much, and yet lack the capstone that would complete my character finish it and make it of some use.

Ever yours lovingly, Mabel.